

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for communicating a data message, comprising:

5 selecting a table key value to be used as an index into an encryption selection table, the key value being a function of a periodic key value and a public variable key value, the encryption selection table specifying at least one of a plurality of encryption methods to be used to encrypt a data message;

10 encrypting the data message using the indicated encryption method; and

transmitting the encrypted data message.

2. The method of Claim 1 and further comprising:

15 receiving a periodic key value and a public variable key value at a communication device storing the encryption selection table; and

calculating the table key value from the public variable key value and the periodic key values.

20 3. The method of Claim 1 and further comprising:

selecting a second encryption method also specified by the table key value from the encryption selection table; and

25 encrypting the data message a second time using the second encryption method prior to transmitting the encrypted message.

30 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the periodic key value comprises a predetermined number agreed upon between a transmitter and a recipient of the data message.

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5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the public variable key value comprises a numeric value which is variable and which is available to both the recipient and the transmitter of the data message.

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6. A data communication device operable to transmit and receive data messages to and from a data communication network, the device comprising:

a central processing unit operable to interface with a user of the device through a user interface;

an encryption decryption engine under the control of the central processing unit and operable to execute a plurality of encryption programs, each of the encryption programs being different than the remainder of the plurality and each of the encryption programs operable to receive a message and to output an encrypted message; and

an encryption selection table accessible using a key value, the encryption selection table specifying at least one of the plurality of encryption programs to be used for each key value.

7. The device of Claim 6 wherein the encryption selection table specifies a plurality of encryption methods to be used in sequence for each of the key values and wherein the encryption engine is operable to encrypt a data message using each of the plurality of encryption programs in sequence prior to transmitting the encrypted data message.

8. The device of Claim 6 wherein the key value comprises a table key value and further comprising a user interface operable to prompt a user of the device and to receive a public variable key value and a periodic key value, the table key value calculated as a function of at least one or both of the public variable key value and the periodic key value.

9. The device of Claim 8 wherein the public variable key value comprises a numeric value which is variable and which is available to both the recipient and the transmitter of the data message.

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10. The device of Claim 8 wherein the periodic key value comprises a predetermined number agreed upon between a transmitter and a recipient of the data message.

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